



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/824,199	04/14/2004	Jonathan Willinger	JWIL 20.354 (100668-00107)	5866
26304	7590	12/21/2005	EXAMINER NGUYEN, TRINH T	
KATTEN MUCHIN ROSENMAN LLP 575 MADISON AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10022-2585			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3644	

DATE MAILED: 12/21/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	Application No. 10/824,199	Applicant(s) WILLINGER ET AL.	
	Examiner Trinh T. Nguyen	Art Unit 3644	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 October 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-19 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-19 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

**DETAILED ACTION**

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 1, 3-5, 8, 12-16, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Iacovelli et al. (US 6,794,013).

For claims 1 and 14, Iacovelli et al. disclose a mat comprising: a) an upper surface bounded by a raised peripheral edge (30), and a plurality of raised bumps (18,48,44,28,24,46) arranged on said upper surface in an irregular, asymmetric pattern.

For claim 14, Iacovelli et al. disclose the plurality of bumps are spaced such that a bowl placed on said upper surface is restrained by said bumps in a plurality of non-dedicated locations.

For claims 3 and 14, Iacovelli et al. disclose the raised peripheral edge has an irregular shape.

For claims 4 and 15, Iacovelli et al. disclose the raised peripheral edge has a shape that, when viewed from the top of the pet mat, is partially curved and partially straight.

For claims 5 and 16, Iacovelli et al. disclose the plurality of bumps further comprises a series of bumps (18,48,44,28,24,46) spaced from the raised peripheral

Art Unit: 3644

edge to prevent a bowl placed on said upper surface from moving toward said raised peripheral edge.

For claims 8 and 18, Iacovelli et al. disclose the upper surface further comprises a decorative image (note that the arrangement of portions 18,48,44,28,24,46 formed a decorative image) and wherein said raised peripheral edge has a shape that is similar to a portion, but not the entirety, of said decorative image.

For claim 12, Iacovelli et al. disclose at least one bowl placement locator (48) formed on said upper surface.

For claim 13, Iacovelli et al. disclose at least one bowl placement locator is part of an ornamental design embossed or imprinted on said upper surface.

It is noted that Iacovelli et al.'s mat is capable of being used as a pet mat since Iacovelli et al.'s mat comprises the satisfying structural members that can be used by a pet. Further, note that it is well settled case law that such limitations, which are essentially method limitations or statements of intended or desired use, do not serve to patentably distinguish the claimed structure over that of the reference. See In re Pearson, 181 USPQ 641; In re Yanush, 177 USPQ 705; In re Finsterwalder, 168 USPQ 530; In re Casey, 152 USPQ 235; In re Otto, 136 USPQ 458; Ex parte Masham, 2 USPQ 2nd 1647; and MPEP 2114 & 2115.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 6, 7, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iacovelli et al. (US 6,794,013) in view of Lampe (US 5,743,210).

As described above, Iacovelli et al. disclose most of the claimed invention except for indicating that the mat is made from a non-stick, tacky material wherein the tacky material is natural rubber.

Lampe teaches the concept of using a non-stick, tacky pad/material (70), wherein the tacky pad/material is made from a rubber-like material, on the bottom of a structural member (22) so as to prevent the structural member from sliding about. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have modified the mat of Iacovelli et al. so as to include the use of a non-stick, tacky pad/material on the bottom of the mat, in a similar manner as taught in Lampe, in order to prevent the mat from sliding about. Regarding the tacky material is natural rubber, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to select such a material, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice. Also, since applicant did not provide a reason and/or showing any criticality as to why the material has to be natural rubber, it

Art Unit: 3644

is believe that through trial and error during the manufacturing process that one comes up with the most efficient material to meet the design criteria (see page 3 of the specification, Applicant only stated that "The pet mat 10 of the present embodiment is preferably formed from a non-stick, tacky material, such as natural rubber").

5. Claims 9-11, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iacovelli et al. (US 6,794,013).

As described above, Iacovelli et al. disclose most of the claimed invention except for indicating that the decorative image has a specific shape (i.e. the decorative image is a pair of paw prints which is defined by a plurality of oval digits and a circular palm portion). However, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the mat of Iacovelli et al. in whatever form or shape was desired or expedient, wherein applicant did not provide a reason or a stated problem is solved by having the specific shape as claimed versus the shape taught by the prior art. Note that a change in form or shape is generally recognized as being well known within the level to one of ordinary skill in the art depending on one's intended use. Furthermore, note that in lines 15 and 16 of page 3 of the specification, applicant stated that "although other ornamental designs are contemplated"; therefore, it is believe that through trial and error in the manufacturing procedure that one comes up with a particular shape to meet the require design criteria for manufacturing of a pet mat.

***Response to Arguments***

6. Applicant's arguments filed 10/13/05 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

7. In response to applicant's argument that Iacovelli does not teach the claimed pet mat and that Iacovelli's mat is a vehicle floor mat. The Examiner agrees that Iacovelli's mat is a vehicle floor mat, however, it is noted that Iacovelli et al.'s mat is capable of being used as a pet mat since Iacovelli et al.'s mat comprises the satisfying structural members that can be used by a pet. Further, note that it is well settled case law that such limitations, which are essentially method limitations or statements of intended or desired use, do not serve to patentably distinguish the claimed structure over that of the reference. See In re Pearson, 181 USPQ 641; In re Yanush, 177 USPQ 705; In re Finsterwalder, 168 USPQ 530; In re Casey, 152 USPQ 235; In re Otto, 136 USPQ 458; Ex parte Masham, 2 USPQ 2nd 1647; and MPEP 2114 & 2115.

8. In response to applicant's argument that Iacovelli does not teach the claimed plurality of bumps, the Examiner disagrees. It is noted that Iacovelli clearly teaches a plurality of raised bumps (18,48,44,28,24,46) and that these bumps are arranged in an irregular and asymmetrical pattern.

9. In response to applicant's argument that Iacovelli does not teach the plurality of bumps are sized and spaced such that a bowl is restrained by the bumps in a plurality of non-dedicated locations when the bowl is placed on the upper surface of the mat, the Examiner disagrees. It is noted that a bowl can be made from various sizes and shapes; therefore, as shown in Figures 1 and 8 (attached at the end of this Office

Art Unit: 3644

Action), a plurality of bumps (44,48) are sized and spaced so that a rectangular bowl can be placed and restrained by the bumps in the non-dedicated locations.

***Conclusion***

10. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

11. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Trinh T. Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-6906. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (9:30 A.M to 6:00 P.M).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Teri Luu can be reached on (571) 272-7045. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.



Art Unit: 3644

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Trinh T Nguyen  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3644

12/14/05

Fig. 1



